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# Canada's Population

## Demographic Perspectives



One of a series from the 1976 Census of Canada



Ministry of Canada

Ministère du Canada



Statistics  
Canada

Statistique  
Canada

Demography  
Division

Division de la  
démographie

## Canada's Population

Demographic Perspectives

One of a series from  
the 1976 Census of Canada

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## Introduction

The 1976 Census of Canada enumerated 23 million people, placing Canada 31st among the nations of the world. Compared to the population giants, Canada's population is very small. China has 852 million, India, 610 million, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, 257 million, and the United States, 215 million; Canada represents only 0.6% of the world total population of 4 billion.

In land area, however, Canada is only second to the Soviet Union, with an area of about 10 million kilometres. The average density of population is 2.3 persons per square kilometre. In this sense Canada is one of the most sparsely populated countries in the world, but such an average has little meaning or significance because much of that land area is virtually uninhabitable. Our relatively sparse population, is therefore, concentrated along the 4,000-mile border with the United States.

Canada's censuses provide a great deal of information on many aspects of the population. From the census and other data, we learn many things about our population, such as:

- This century has seen the greatest growth in Canada's population, from 5.4 million in 1901 to 23 million in 1976.
- The components of growth are births, deaths and migration, and of these, births have been the single most important factor.
- Immigration has also played a major role in population growth, and is likely to be of increasing importance in future growth.
- The proportions of elderly are growing and the proportions of young children are declining.
- The 1976 Census recorded that Canada has for the first time more females than males.
- Almost two-thirds of Canada's total population live in Ontario and Quebec.
- Over three-quarters of all Canadians live in urban areas and almost 7 million live in Toronto, Montréal and Vancouver together.



# Population Growth: Past and Present



## Increasing numbers over the years

Canada's total population of 23 million in 1976 indicated that 1.4 million have been added to the population since the census of 1971.

We have come a long way from the early 1600's, when only a handful of European settlers and an estimated 200,000 Native Indians and Inuit

(Eskimos) inhabited Canada. In 1851, the population (excluding Newfoundland) stood at 2.4 million. It grew to 3.7 million by 1871, the time of the first Dominion Census of Canada, and passed the 5-million mark around 1901. The 10-million mark was passed around 1931 and the 20-million mark around 1966.

Table 1

Growth of Population, Canada, 1901-1976

Census year	Population ('000)	Number ('000)	Change over
			preceding census
			Per cent
1901	5,371	538	11.1
1911	7,207	1,835	34.2
1921	8,788	1,581	21.9
1931	10,377	1,589	18.1
1941	11,507	1,130	10.9
1951	14,009	2,503	21.8
1956	16,081	2,072	14.8
1961	18,238	2,157	13.4
1966	20,015	1,777	9.7
1971	21,568	1,553	7.8
1976	22,993	1,424	6.6

Notes: Newfoundland is included from 1951. Population census was taken every 10 years up to 1951, and every five years since then.

Source: George, M.V., 1976, *Population Growth in Canada*, 1971 Census Profile Studies, Catalogue 99-701, Table 2.  
1976 Census of Canada, Catalogue 92-823, Table 11.

## Most of the growth in this century

Most of Canada's population growth has taken place over the past 75 years — an additional 17.6 million Canadians since 1901. Part of this increase is accounted for

by Newfoundland joining Canada in 1949; by the time of the 1951 Census, Newfoundland's contribution to the Canadian population was over 361,000 persons.

## Marked fluctuations in growth rates

Although our overall numbers have been increasing, the intercensal annual rates of growth have varied. The 20th century has been marked by three distinct trends: a downward trend from 1911 to 1941; an upward trend to 1956; and a steady downward trend

since 1956. The recent downward trend has continued and reached a low of 1.3% in 1976. Canada's population, however, has been growing faster than that of the United States (0.7%) and most other industrialized countries.

Chart 1

# Population Growth in Canada, 1911-1976



Source: Same as for Table 1

The varying growth rates of this century are highlighted by two decades of spectacular increase and one decade of spectacular decrease. The highest rate of growth occurred between 1901 and 1911, when the population increased by 2 million persons giving an annual growth rate of 3.0%. Heavy immigration flows accounted for most of this high growth rate. In contrast, the growth rate reached the lowest

point of 1.0% per annum during the Depression decade of 1931-1941 when the birth rate (births per 1,000 population) was low and immigration was negligible. The growth rate regained its momentum during the post-Second World War years and reached a high of 2.8% per year between 1951-1961. These were the peak years of the baby boom and high immigration.

## The components of growth

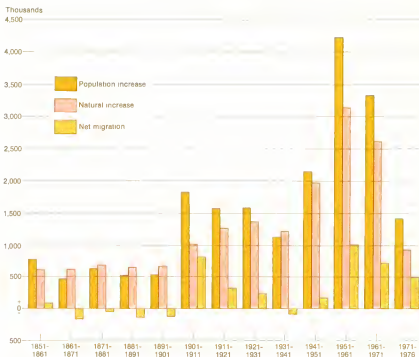
Births, deaths, immigration and emigration are the basic components of population change. These components, presented as natural increase (births minus deaths) and net migration (immigration minus emigration), have affected Canada's population changes to varying degrees.

Natural increase has been the dominant factor of population

growth in Canada. With the exception of the period 1901-1911, over 70% of this century's intercensal population growth has been due to natural increase. In fact, in four of the intercensal periods, when there were net losses due to migration, natural increase was the sole factor of growth.

Chart 2

Components of Population Growth, Canada,  
1851-1976



Note: Figures for 1941-1951 exclude Newfoundland.

Source: George, M. V., 1976, *Population Growth in Canada*, 1971 Census Profile Studies Catalogue 99-701, page 7  
 Unpublished estimates prepared by the Population Estimates and Projections Division, Statistics Canada



Births played the most important part — a long view of fertility trends

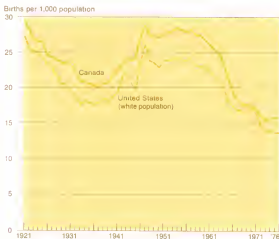
Fertility, as a measure of the frequency of birth in population has been the most important single factor of Canadian population growth. Canada's early birth rates were perhaps among the highest known in the history of western European countries. Estimates for Canada as a whole before 1871 are comparable with today's high birth rate countries, which have over 40 births per 1,000 population. Around 1870, the birth rate started to decline, the downward trend paralleled that

of the White population of the United States, but at consistently higher levels.

The high birth rates in the early periods compensated for high death rates (deaths per 1,000 population), but as the death rate came down, the birth rate continued to remain very high for some time. For example, between 1681 and 1850, over 60 births per 1,000 population were recorded for some years in Quebec.

Chart 3

Birth Rates for Canada and the U.S. White Population: 1921-1976



Source: Statistics Canada, Vital Statistics, 1975 and 1976, Catalogue 84-204, Table 1  
Vital Statistics of The United States, 1973, Volume 1, 1977, Table 1-2  
United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Vital Statistics Report, Publication No. (PHS) 78-1120, March 29, 1978

## A closer look at birth rates

Annual birth rate figures, available from 1921, show considerable fluctuations in the birth rate up to 1958. From the high of 29.3 in 1921, the birth rate declined fairly steadily to 20.1 in 1937. By 1946 it had risen to 27.2. During the post-war baby-boom period, it reached one of the highest levels since 1921, 28.9 in 1947, and it remained at a relatively high level until 1958. After that year, the birth rate declined fairly steadily reaching a low of

15.7 in 1976. The overall birth rate declined by 44.3% between 1957 and 1976.

Another way of looking at fertility is by considering the total fertility rate (number of children per woman). Three distinct trends are shown by this rate for the years after 1921 — a downward trend from 1926 to 1937, an upward trend between 1938 and 1959, and a steady downward trend after 1959.

## Depression years

In 1926, the total fertility rate for Canada was relatively high at 3.4. In the course of the next 10 years, the rate declined

steadily and reached a level of 2.6 children per woman in 1937.

## Baby-boom period

In 1938, however, the decline in the fertility trend was reversed. The total fertility rate reached almost 3.6 in 1947 and 3.9 in 1959. The increase in the fertility level of 2.1% per year between 1937 and 1959

reflected in essence the rise in marriages after World War II and the "catching-up" of births postponed by families during the Depression and the war years.

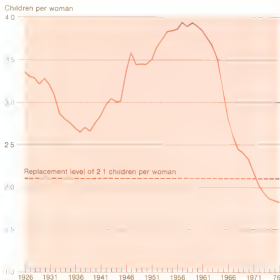
## Unprecedented decline in recent years

The most dramatic trend in Canadian fertility history has taken place since 1959, when the total fertility rate dropped unexpectedly. The decline has been greater than during the Depression, dropping more than 50% between 1959 and 1974, from 3.9 to 1.9. The steady decline continued through 1976, when a total

fertility rate of just 1.8 was recorded. The current total fertility rate has fallen below the replacement level of 2.1 children per woman, which is the level at which parents replace themselves (the bit extra is required because some children die before reaching the age of childbearing and some will not have children).

Chart 4

# Total Fertility Rate, Canada, 1926-1976



Source: Statistics Canada, Vital Statistics, 1975 and 1976, Catalogue 84-204, Table 6

What caused the fall in fertility level?

The decline in the 1930's took place mainly as a consequence of the economic hardships resulting from the Great Depression, but the anomaly of the decline since 1959 is that it occurred at a time when the economic outlook was favourable for high birth rates. The explanation of the phenomenon therefore becomes a complex matter. Changes in the age structure of the population, marriage rates, timing of births, and macro and micro socio-economic changes influencing the attitudes of individual families towards fertility are all relevant to the latest decline. It appears that the pendulum of aspiration has clearly swung back towards fewer or no children.

Certainly, access to more efficient contraception methods and the rise in general education and communication about modes of family planning have played a role. To this may be added the declining weight and effectiveness of legal obstacles and of religious and moral objections to the use of various birth control measures.

Whatever the reasons for the decline in fertility in recent years, there is no clear evidence to suggest a reversal in the present trend in the near future. The general feeling that things are getting worse rather than better may constitute the most significant force working against a high fertility level.

## Mortality levels — among the lowest in the world

In contrast to the fertility rates, there has been a steady downward trend in Canadian mortality since 1921. The crude death rate of Canada was 7.3 per 1,000 population in 1976, one of the lowest in the world. When registration data became available in 1921, the rate was 10.6, which indicates a drop of

32.1% since then. The mortality trend based on crude and standardized death rates (i.e., after holding the effects of the changing age composition constant) shows that, although the downward trend has been continuing, its pace has slowed substantially since 1960.

Chart 5

### Crude and Standardized Death Rate, Canada, 1921-1976



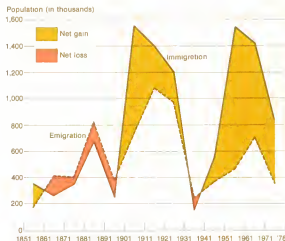
Source: Statistics Canada, Vital Statistics, 1976, Catalogue 84-206, Tables 11 and 9

This deceleration in mortality decline is also evident from the data on the expectation of life at birth. In 1971, the life tables for Canada reported an expectation of life at birth of 69.3 years for males and 76.4 years for females. (U.S.; Life expectancies in 1975 were 68.7 years for men and 76.5 for

women.) These values represent a gain of about 9.3 years for men and 14.3 years for women over the corresponding levels in 1931. The gains were substantial before 1956, averaging an increase of 0.3 year per annum among males and 0.4 year among females.

Chart 6

# Immigration to and Emigration from Canada, 1851-1976



Note: Figures for 1941-1951 exclude Newfoundland

Source: George, M. V., 1978, *Place of Birth and Citizenship of Canada's Population, 1971 Census Profile Studies*, Catalogue 99-711, page 32

Unpublished estimates prepared by the Population Estimates and Projections Division, Statistics Canada.

Migration, a substantial contributor to growth

The decade 1901-1911 witnessed a flood of immigrants — over 1.5 million, equal to the number who had arrived during the previous 40 years — who contributed to a 44% increase in total population during this period. An upsurge in immigration during the post-war period 1951-1961 was an important contributory factor for the high growth rate during this period.

Although the contribution of migration to population growth has varied considerably during recent years, with a low level in fertility in the 1970's, net migration contributes substantially to current population growth (over a third in 1976).

A striking aspect of the migration phenomenon has been the wide fluctuations in the numbers of immigrants arriving each year. These annual fluctuations were the result of many factors both in Canada and abroad. Economic conditions in Canada and the sending countries are important determinants of migratory movements. In addition, political conditions and immigration regulations are relevant forces responsible for the ebb and flow of past immigration. The unprecedented volume in 1957, for example, was due to the Hungarian Revolution and Suez Crisis, which brought thousands of people to Canada.

Table 2

Expectation of Life at Birth (in Years) by Sex,  
Canada, 1931 to 1971

Year	Male	Female	Sex differentials (female minus male)
	Expectation of life at birth	Expectation of life at birth	
1931	60.0	62.1	2.1
1941	63.0	66.3	3.3
1951	66.3	70.8	4.5
1956	67.6	72.9	5.3
1961	68.4	74.2	5.8
1966	68.8	75.2	6.4
1971	69.3	76.4	7.1

Source: Statistics Canada, Vital Statistics, Catalogue 84-206, 1973, Table 6.

Life expectancy  
higher for females

Another significant aspect of the historical trend has been the widening gap between the average length of life for the two sexes. What was a small margin of two years in 1931 has since grown gradually to a difference of over six years between the average life expectancies of men and women.

Part of the reason for the rise in life expectancy has been the drastic reduction in the infant mortality rate (infant deaths per 1,000 births). In 1921 the infant mortality rate was 102.1; the 1976 rate was only 14.0, which was even lower than the U.S. infant mortality rate of 15.1. But Canada's rate remains higher than that of Norway's 11.1 and Sweden's 8.7.

Canada, an immigrant  
country

It is well known that Canada is a country of immigration. With the exception of the small number of Native Indians and

Inuit, Canada's population is composed of immigrants and their descendants.

Many leave Canada  
for the U.S.

What is not clear to many is that Canada has not always gained from migration. For example, from 1861 to 1901 and from 1931 to 1941, Canada actually lost more people than we received through immigration, which contributed to the slow population growth of

these periods. Emigrants from Canada included persons born in Canada and those born outside Canada. A large number of immigrants re-emigrate to the United States. Some return to their countries of origin.



### Three issues of recent immigration

Even more significant than the impact on the Canadian population as a whole is the marked contribution of immigrants to the quantity and quality of the labour force.

Three important aspects of the immigration in the 1960's and 1970's may be mentioned.

First, a drastic increase occurred in the professional and skilled categories of immigrants. Second, there was a substantial increase in the number of immigrants from non-European countries. Third, the immigrants were not evenly distributed across Canada — a

large majority of them were absorbed into the big metropolitan centres such as Toronto, Montréal and Vancouver. These aspects coupled with the economic slow-down of the 1970's brought increasing resistance in the country to the idea of maintaining a high level of immigration. The new Immigration Act that came into effect in April 1978 aims to regulate more closely the volume of future immigration and to deal with the issues related to the three aspects of recent immigration.



# Age, Sex and Marital Status



## More females than males in 1976

Age and sex are the most fundamental aspects of population composition. In 1976, for the first time in the history of our census-taking, the number of females actually exceeded that of males. A total of 11,449,525 males and 11,543,080 females were recorded giving a sex ratio of only 992 males for every 1,000 females.

Before 1976, with the exception of 1971 when the sex ratio was almost balanced (at 1,002 males per 1,000 females), all other censuses showed Canada's population as being male dominated. In 1961, for example, there were 1,022 males for every 1,000 females. The historical data show that the sex ratios recorded in the decennial censuses of 1851 through 1961 fluctuated in the range of 1,022 to 1,129.

How do we account for the changing sex ratios of

Canada's population? Excess mortality among males has an important effect on the sex ratio. Although more boys are born than girls (in 1976, 105 boys were born for every 100 girls), mortality is higher for males than for females. Because most important mortality changes have benefited women more than men, life expectancy at birth has increasingly favoured women.

Another important factor for the variations in sex ratios has been immigration. Immigration is generally male-selective which was particularly responsible for the upward trend in sex ratios between 1881 and 1911. However, the change in the sex pattern of migration, with increasing female immigrants in the recent periods, has contributed to the steady downward trend in sex ratio since 1961.

## Changing age structure

The profile of Canada's population by age and sex in 1976 is illustrated here as a pyramid; the long-term changes in fertility and mortality have been mainly responsible for its

shape. The entire age structure ultimately becomes a reflection of past births and deaths, as babies born in different years move up through various age categories.

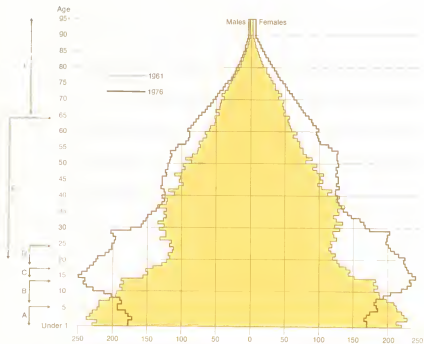
## Fewer children, more elderly

Two of the most striking changes in the structure of Canada's population are the declining proportions of young children (0-5) and the growing proportions of elderly persons (65+). Young children formed 14.7% of the total population in 1961; by 1976 their proportion had declined to 9.2%. During this same period of time, the proportion of elderly persons increased from 7.6% to 8.7%; in fact, the population 65+ has increased by 43.9% over the 15-year period, while the

population in general increased by only 26.1%.

The declining birth rate has contributed significantly to the aging of Canada's population. The median age, which is a summary measure of the aging of population, has gone up from 22.7 years in 1901 to 27.8 in 1976. Many other industrialized nations are also characterised by an aging population; for example, in the United States, one in 10 persons are 65 or over.

# Age Pyramid of the Population of Canada 1961 and 1976



(A) Pre-school (ages 0-5)

(B) Elementary school (ages 6-13)

(C) High school (ages 14-17)

(D) College (ages 18-24)

(E) Working ages (ages 20-64)

(F) Retirement age population (ages 65+)

Source 1961 Census of Canada, unpublished data  
1976 Census of Canada, Catalogue 92-832 Table 1

Fewer school children, smaller classes

What about other age groups? At the elementary school level, the number of children aged 6-13 years increased from 3.2 million to 3.7 million between 1961 and 1971. By 1976, however, their numbers had declined to 3.3 million; as a proportion of the total population, they decreased from 17.4% to 14.4% between 1961 and 1976.

During the early 1960's, the school system expanded to accommodate the growing numbers of school children at the elementary level. But the continuing decline in Canada's birth rate from 1959 onwards has led to smaller classes, some schools closing and others amalgamating to make more efficient use of the school facilities.

More high school students . . .

The high school population, as indicated by the age group 14-17 years, has increased in numbers and proportion over the past three censuses. Numerically, they increased

from 1.2 million in 1961 to 1.8 million in 1971 and to 1.9 million in 1976. As a proportion of the population, they grew from 6.8% to 8.3%, between 1961 and 1976.

. . . but fewer in the near future

Already the growth rate for this age group is slowing down — the years 1961 to 1971 were marked by a relatively high growth rate of 4.2% per year, but between 1971 and 1976, the annual growth rate was only

1.6%. While the numbers of students are falling, the numbers of potential teachers from the baby-boom cohort are increasing. This situation results in an over-supply of teachers.

More and more college-age people

The population of college age (approximately 18-24) has increased significantly since 1961. In that year, there were 1.7 million people of college age, but by 1976, they had virtually doubled to 3.0 million. This represents an annual growth rate of 5.2%, which is far above the annual growth rate of only 1.4% for the population as a whole.

The college-age population represented 9.4% of the total population in 1961, their share increased to 13.3% in 1976. Most of the persons in this group were born during the baby-boom period of the 1950's and 1960's. This group will have to face a relatively greater competition in life as they pass through the various stages of their life cycle.

The growing group of working-age population

The population of working age represents the most important group in most societies. In Canada, the 12.7 million persons of working age (usually taken to be persons aged 20-64 years) represented 55.4% of the population in 1976; only 9.2 million people were in this age group in 1961. The annual growth rate throughout the 15 years was fairly stable at 2.5%.

Economic expansion, however, has not occurred at a rate that can absorb the ever-increasing numbers of new workers. In contrast to the flourishing 1960's, the mid-1970's are characterised by relatively high unemployment levels along with more restricted employment and promotion opportunities.

## Marital status

The census data on marital status cover all persons 15 years of age and over. In 1976, of the 8.4 million males aged 15 years and over, 31.4% were single, 64.9% were married (including separated), 2.3%

were widowed and 1.4% were divorced. Among the corresponding 8.7 million females who outnumber men, 24.6% were single, 63.5% were married, 9.9% were widowed and 2.1% were divorced.

Table 4

Numerical and Percentage Distribution of Males and Females 15 Years and Over by Marital Status, Canada, 1976

Marital status	Males		Females	
	number		per cent	
Single	2,646,580	2,129,840	31.4	24.6
Married (includes separated)	5,474,235	5,499,670	64.9	63.4
Widowed	189,665	853,900	2.3	9.9
Divorced	119,035	183,505	1.4	2.1
Total	8,429,515	8,666,915	100.0	100.0

Source: 1976 Census of Canada, Catalogue 92-824, Table 17.

Although there were more females than males in the total population 15 and over (992 males per 1,000 females), single males outnumbered single females (1,243:1,000) in 1976. This was mainly because of higher proportions of females marrying, particularly at younger ages. The numbers of married males and females were nearly equal. However, the number of widowed females far exceeded that of males (222:1,000), mainly because of the higher longevity of females. The divorced females also outnumbered males (649:1,000). This may be attributed to the lower

remarriage rates among females and their lower mortality level. There has been a substantial increase in the divorced population in recent years, from 175,000 in 1971 to 303,000 in 1976. The upward trend in the divorced population reflects a change in the social acceptability of divorce.

It is interesting to note that estimates based on divorce rates in 1971 indicate that about one-fifth of those persons who married between the ages of 15 and 25 (born during 1946-1956) may obtain a divorce by the time they are 45 years old.

# Population Distribution



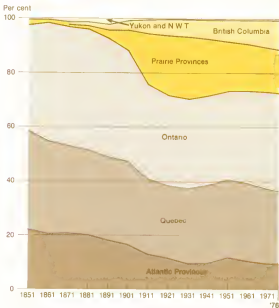
## Ontario and Quebec: the two big provinces

Ontario and Quebec are Canada's two largest provinces, with a combined total population of 14.5 million. Throughout the history of the censuses, those two provinces have always had the greatest proportions of Canada's

population. In 1851, for example, 36.5% of the total population lived in Quebec and 39.1% lived in Ontario. By 1976, those proportions had changed but were still relatively high, at 27.1% and 35.9%, respectively.

Chart 8

Percentage Distribution of Population by  
Regions, Canada, 1851-1976



Note: Atlantic includes Newfoundland from 1951

Source: 1976 Census of Canada, Catalogue 92-823, Table 11  
George, M. V. 1976, *Population Growth in Canada, 1971 Census Profile Studies*, Catalogue 99-701, page 30

Much of the distributional changes in population occurred between 1901 and 1911 when the four western provinces (Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia) experienced an increase in their combined share of the population — from 11.1% to 23.9%. In 1976, these provinces accounted for 27.2% of the total population of Canada.

Since 1851, the Maritime provinces (Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick) experienced a steady decline in their share of the population — from 22.0% in 1851 to 7.1% in 1976. Newfoundland has experienced small changes in its share of the population ever since it became part of Canada, from 2.6% in 1951 to 2.4% in 1976.

## Recent population growth in the provinces

With the exception of Saskatchewan, all provinces gained in population between 1971 and 1976. Ontario, British Columbia, Alberta and Quebec had the greatest numerical gains. This is not surprising because they have the largest population.

British Columbia and Alberta, however, had the biggest

percentage gains of 12.9% each during the five-year period. In comparison, Ontario increased by 7.3% and Quebec by only 3.4%. Altogether, five of the provinces (plus the two territories) had percentage increases in their populations above the national average of 6.6%.

Table 5

### Population Change by Province, 1971 to 1976

Province	Population		Difference	
	1971	1976	Number	Per cent
Newfoundland	522,105	557,725	35,620	6.8
Prince Edward Island	111,640	118,230	6,590	5.9
Nova Scotia	788,960	828,570	39,610	5.0
New Brunswick	634,560	677,250	42,690	6.7
Quebec	6,027,765	6,234,445	206,680	3.4
Ontario	7,703,105	8,264,465	561,360	7.3
Manitoba	988,250	1,021,505	33,255	3.4
Saskatchewan	926,245	921,325	- 4,920	- 0.5
Alberta	1,627,875	1,838,035	210,160	12.9
British Columbia	2,184,620	2,466,610	281,990	12.9
Yukon	18,390	21,835	3,445	18.7
Northwest Territories	34,805	42,610	7,805	22.4

Source: 1976 Census of Canada, Catalogue 92-823, Table 11.



The importance of natural increase in provincial growth

Natural increase has been the dominant factor of population growth in all the provinces, except British Columbia since 1931 (the period for which data are available). In British Columbia, however, net migration gains exceeded natural increase for the decades 1931-1941, 1941-1951 and 1961-1971. The different pattern for British Columbia may be attributed to a combination of relatively high in-migration and low natural increase as a result of relatively low birth rates.

In recent years the large influx of immigrants has made significant contributions to the growth of population in Ontario,

Quebec, Alberta and British Columbia. This is in keeping with what we would expect, since most of the immigrants coming to Canada settle in these four provinces.

Migration between provinces has also contributed to redistributing the population.

For example, Ontario has been the favourite province for migrants leaving Quebec and the Eastern provinces (over a five-year period). Alberta and British Columbia have increased their populations mainly as a result of migrants from Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

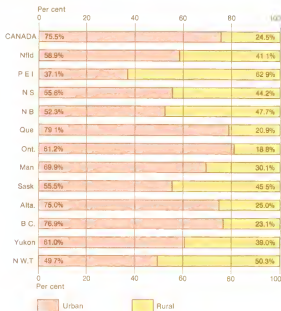
Urban areas preferred . . .

Throughout our history, the people of Canada have been moving mainly from rural to urban areas. Today, over three-quarters (75.5%) of all Canadians live in urban centres, but this has not always been the case; in 1851 only 13.0% of the population lived in urban areas, while 87.0% lived in rural areas.

In recent years, however, there has been a movement out of cities to rural areas. For example, of those persons 5 years and over in 1971 who moved from census metropolitan areas between 1966 and 1971, 25% went to rural areas.

Chart 9

Percentage of Urban and Rural Population  
for Canada and the Provinces and  
Territories, 1976



Source: 1976 Census of Canada, Catalogue 92-823, Table 12

All provinces, with the exception of Prince Edward Island, have more than half of their populations living in urban areas.

Ontario and Quebec, as well as being the most populous

provinces, have at least four out of every five persons living in densely settled areas. Prince Edward Island, on the other hand, has only two people out of every five living in urban areas.

... because they provide greater work opportunities

The process of urbanization marks Canada's development from an agricultural economy to a highly urbanized and industrialized country. Alberta provides a recent example of such developments. Just under half (47.6%) of Alberta's population was classed as

urban in 1951, but by 1971 this proportion had increased to three-quarters (73.5%). The expansion of oil, natural gas and industrial development were the prime factors in accounting for this rapid change.

Even more of us are living in the cities ...

The 1976 Census registered 54.4% of Canada's population living in a total of 23 census metropolitan areas (CMAs).

Each CMA represents the main labour market of a continuous built-up area having a population of 100,000 or more.

With the exception of Windsor (Ontario) and Sudbury (Ontario), all other CMAs have shown a percentage increase in their populations since 1971. The most notable increases were in Calgary (16.5%), Kitchener (14.0%) and Oshawa (12.3%).

Table 6

#### Canada's 10 Largest CMAs

	Population	
	1976	1971
Toronto	2,803,101	2,602,098
Montréal	2,802,485	2,729,211
Vancouver	1,166,348	1,082,352
Ottawa — Hull	693,288	619,861
Winnipeg	578,217	549,808
Edmonton	554,228	496,014
Québec	542,158	501,365
Hamilton	529,371	503,122
Calgary	469,917	403,343
St. Catharines — Niagara	301,921	285,802

Source: 1976 Census of Canada, Catalogue 92-806, Table 6.

... and especially the super cities of over a million persons

Over one-quarter (29.5%) of all Canadians live in the three largest census metropolitan areas. These are: Toronto, with a population of 2.8 million; Montréal, with 2.8 million; and Vancouver, with 1.2 million persons.

Will the over-crowding and pollution of our cities become a nightmare for future

generations? Or will our planners take more notice of the rapid change in the size and structure of our population? Already the suburban sprawl of our population is blurring the boundaries between the town and country. But our censuses keep us up to date on these changes.

# Future Prospects



Is Canada close to zero population growth?

The future growth of Canada's population depends on all the three components of population growth — births, deaths and net migration. Of these, births or fertility will be the crucial factor. Hence, future growth depends mainly on whether the current total fertility rate, which is below the "replacement level" of 2.1 children, will remain stable, fall or rise. A fertility rate below the replacement level does not mean that a zero population growth (which could be achieved when births equal

deaths and net migration is zero) will soon be reached in Canada. Estimates show that, even if net migration were reduced to zero level and the average family size were only 2.1 children, the population of Canada would continue to grow until about the year 2040 before stabilizing at something over 31 million. This long delay in reaching zero growth may be attributed to the baby-boom generation, who will keep the childbearing population large for years to come.

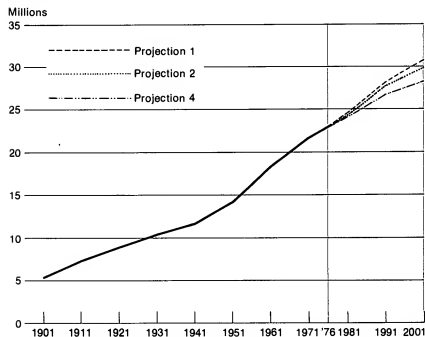
Population will continue growing

Statistics Canada's most recent population projections, based on the 1976 population and a

combination of various assumptions of fertility and migration, indicate that

Chart 10

Past and Future Growth of the Population in Canada, 1901-2001



Note: Projection 1 assumes a total fertility rate of 2.1 in 1991 and a net migration of 100,000 per year.

Projection 2 assumes a total fertility rate of 2.1 in 1991 and a net migration of 75,000 per year.

Projection 4 assumes a total fertility rate of 1.7 in 1991 and a net migration of 50,000 per year.

Source: Statistics Canada, *Population Projections for Canada and the Provinces, 1976-2001*, 1979, Catalogue 91-520 projections 1, 2 and 4.  
George, M.V. 1976, *Population Growth in Canada*, 1971 Census Profile Studies, Catalogue 99-701, Table 2.

Canada's population size will reach 26.5 to 28.1 million by 1991, and 28.1 to 31.0 million by 2001. The high projection, for example, assumes an average family size of 2.1 children per woman in 1991

and net migration of 100,000 persons per year. The low projection is based on an average family size of only 1.7 children and net migration of 50,000 per year.

## Some implications

There are many uncertainties in population projections, particularly because of the difficulties in predicting future fertility patterns and the uncertainty about immigration policies. However, the projections help to unravel the likely implications of how the changing population may affect various aspects of life. The impact of the changing age-sex structure, for example, will be greater as those children born in recent years age to become school children, working adults, family members and eventually senior citizens.

One of the obvious effects of this changing age structure will be the reduction in the number and proportion of the population under age 20. A direct effect of this will be the declining enrolment in schools and universities. This creates many problems in the management of the educational institutions and for those in the teaching profession.

Another important effect will be the large increase in the number and proportion of persons over age 65 (about 3.4 million or 11.2% of the total population) by 2001. The aging

population will have important implications for retirement age policy, old age pensions, housing schemes and a range of social and welfare programmes. A related consequence will be the increase in death rates. Many European countries with high proportions of older populations already have death rates higher than Canada's 7.3 per 1,000 population (e.g., German Democratic Republic, 14.3, United Kingdom, 12.2).

With a higher death rate and a lower birth rate, the contribution of natural increase to Canada's future population growth will be less. And migration which accounted for over one-third of population growth in 1976 is likely to play a more important role in Canada's future population growth.



Canada has taken a census of population every ten years from 1851 and every five years from 1956. The last census was taken on June 1, 1976. The census data constitute the most important single source of information on the population of Canada by many geographic areas from the national and provincial levels down to smaller groups such as cities, towns and municipalities. These data include: information on the number of people who live in Canada; their characteristics such as age, sex, marital status, language, educational level and occupation; number and types of families; and types of dwellings. Census information is used for a variety of purposes by private individuals, governments at all levels, educational institutions, business people and other organizations.

As part of a programme to supplement 1976 Census statistical reports, a special

series of popular studies has been undertaken on selected topics of public interest. Each study is a description of major trends and patterns. The data used are from the 1976 Census and other relevant sources.

This series is deliberately non-technical and is designed for use at the high school and community college/university levels. However, it could also be of interest to the general public and other groups, such as public libraries, media, politicians, community and neighbourhood groups, marketing people and educational publishers.

**Canada's Population** is the third in this series. It brings together under one cover highlights of information about the growth, distribution and demographic characteristics of the population. Other studies are being planned for future publication.

Produced by the Census and Household Surveys Field and the Information Division of Statistics Canada.

Many persons contributed to the production of this series. Edward Pryor was the originator of the project. It was carried out under the direction of Anatole Romaniuc, project-manager and M.V. George, project leader.

The manuscript for this study was prepared in the Census and Household Surveys Field by

Leeroy Murray and M. V. George. A number of professionals from the Field made a valuable contribution in reviewing the manuscript.

Stan Boswell supervised the editing of the manuscript and Jim Power coordinated the design and art work.





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